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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/C, DS/IP/AF AND DS/DSS/ITA.

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [RW](#)
SUBJECT: GENOCIDE MEMORIAL IN SW RWANDA VANDALIZED

¶1. (U) Summary. In early morning on 23 March a hand grenade was used to vandalize a Genocide Memorial Site near the border town of Cyangugu. The unidentified perpetrators were driven off by GOR security forces without causing extensive damage to the site. Few additional facts are available but GOR authorities suspect local supporters of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), recently released prisoners and/or gacaca suspects and note that incidents of vandalism and violence against genocide survivors are not uncommon during this time of year due to the increased tension during the annual period of mourning. End summary.

¶2. (U) According to an RSO source with close ties to Rwandan security services, at approximately 01h00 local time a hand grenade was tossed at a memorial containing the remains of over 2,000 genocide victims in Gashonga Sector, Rusizi District, Western Province. The vandals reportedly lobbed at least one hand grenade at the memorial before being fired at and chased off by local defense forces (LDF) personnel who were guarding a nearby bank. (Note. The LDF is a local militia used by the GOR to augment the Rwandan National Police (RNP). End note.) There were no casualties and the perpetrators avoided capture however, they reportedly left behind a five liter gerrycan of gasoline and matches.

¶3. (SBU) On 26 March, a Presidential Advisor told poloff that this kind of act was not unusual in the weeks leading up to the period of mourning and may have been committed by individuals implicated in gacaca or local Rwandans with ties to the FDLR. He added that the GOR expected more incidents of vandalism and attacks on survivors and gacaca witnesses. Although the pro-government English daily "The New Times" reported that "Rwandan insurgents operating from the DRC" were responsible, all GOR sources contacted by emboffs thought the perpetrators were most likely from, and still located in, the immediate area.

¶4. (SBU) Comment. The annual week of mourning, 7-14 April, is always tense in Rwanda. Factors that will likely aggravate the tension this year include the February release of approximately 7,000 prisoners accused of genocide crimes and the start of nationwide gacaca hearings in July 2006. After this act of vandalism, as with other such incidents, Rwandan officials, reacting in a generally composed and resolute manner, noted that genocide ideology is alive and well in the country. End comment.

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